



Watery Sauces Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 66

November 2011

Newsletter of the Water Resources Retirees Association

Another new DG

As previously reported, the former Director-General of DERM, John Bradley, was appointed DG of the Department of Premier and Cabinet on 6 June. Terry Wall acted in the position of DG (DERM) until a new appointment could be made. This has now been done.

Jim Reeves took up duties as the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Resource Management on 29 August 2011. Prior to that Jim was the General Manager of the Institute of Sustainable Resources at QUT, and previous to that he was the Divisional Manager of Brisbane Water.

Mr Reeves has also served on the boards of the Water Services Association of Australia and the Urban Land Development Authority.

He has significant leadership and public sector experience, particularly in the fields of greenhouse gas management, long term ecological research, water and geo-systems, energy systems, and sustainable communities and infrastructure.

Mr Reeves's appointment is actually a secondment from QUT for a period of twelve months. The State election is due to be held within that period.

One of the Ministers with responsibilities in DERM, Stephen Robertson, will retire at the next election.

Terry Wall, having completed his stint as DG has resumed his former duties as Associate Director-General, Operations and Environmental Regulation.

Perhaps Jim Reeves is having second thoughts about the wisdom of taking on the position. Almost as soon as he had sat down for the first time, Cougar Energy announced that it would sue the Government and John Bradley, Terry Wall and Jim Reeves, seeking damages because of the forced closure of their CSG operations near Kingaroy. Members will probably be aware of the case where carcinogenic chemicals were reported to have been discharged from their operations. Randall Cox was not named in the case, but no doubt, in his role of managing CSG for the Queensland Water Commission, he will find himself in court.

Another of our colleagues, Peter Allan, has been caught up in legal proceedings with the Commission of Inquiry into last wet season's floods. WRRRA is hoping Peter will be able to provide us with inside information on the process in due course.

The Commission of Inquiry has now completed its public hearings and members are busily compiling their report. In the meantime, state and local government authorities are busily preparing for a wet season forecast to be wet, but not as wet as last season. But it has been the driest start to November on record in SEQ!

From the Editor's Chair

It must be more than thirty years since the last bell rang in Mineral House to announce the arrival of morning tea, afternoon tea or lunch. And yet, after all these years, I for one, still know instinctively that it is 10:30, 3:30 or 1 o'clock and that it is time for the appropriate repast – even though Helen remains oblivious to the actual time. Are other retirees similarly habituated?

How easy it must have been for Pavlov to train his dogs. All mammals appear to be creatures of habit. When we go to a conference and sit in an unallocated seat at the first session, we automatically sit there at all subsequent gatherings and bitterly resent anyone who has inadvertently taken our seat.

Sorry, I have to go. My natural clock tells me it's smoko time.

Happy Festive Season to all.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

Further apologies

I must be a mere mortal after all. Jon Henry has tactfully pointed out that A.B. Patersen did not write *Said Hanrahan*. That honour goes to Australian bush poet John O'Brien (actually that was the pen name of Patrick Joseph Hartigan). I'm sorry to have offended.

And furthermore Col Cooney did not celebrate his 70th birthday this year as Jon and others who attended his 75th earlier in 2011 attest. It must have been a senior moment on my part when I read the stud book.

Out and About

It seems that the high Aussie dollar is encouraging many of us to travel overseas. As well as the Pullars and the Rogers who travelled in Europe earlier this year, now our secretary Peter Jones and his wife are travelling overseas for eight weeks. Lee Rogers who has taken on the role of acting Secretary in his absence has commented to others that Peter is very well organised indeed and it hasn't been too difficult at all to "hold the fort" in his absence.

Carol Davidson has emailed from the United States that she is keeping track of events from afar.

Closer to home, our President Hein and wife Francoise are exploring southern states on an extended trip and will no doubt compile a future article on their travels.

Even closer to home, Dave Morwood hoisted the sails and ventured out on to Moreton Bay in his boat which he hasn't taken out for quite a while. Judy reports that Dave enjoyed himself immensely and will be on the boat regularly from now on.

Vice President Geoff Eades has been frustrated of late by a dicky knee and had hoped that an arthroscopy would get him back on the golf course as good as new. Geoff has been back on the course but needs a buggy to get around and is contemplating more treatment. We wish him well.

Daryl Brigden who represented SunWater at a number of association lunches retired in early September after 46½ years' service and was invited to join the association by a number of members who attended his farewell. Daryl was for many years in charge of the Rocklea materials laboratory and became an expert in roller compacted concrete mixes. In later years, he took on more of a project management role with SunWater where it seems he was extremely valuable. Daryl's retirement was short lived – he is back working two days a week with SunWater.

There has been a spate of retirements of late with the department deliberately downsizing. Apparently around 200 officers have accepted Voluntary Separation Packages, but only a few from the water area. These include Ross Walduck, Bob Bell, Graeme Lacey, Brian Davis, Ron Moore, Ray Jameson and Allan Mayne. Members may also remember retiree Mick Capelin. Gary 'Max' Merritt has taken a package to leave Mines Department to which he was redeployed some years ago when Water and Mines separated. Hector Macdonald has also called it quits but has very kindly contributed the material on page 4. Peter Gilbey, who retired a couple of years ago but came back to work part time, will go into full retirement next year. We wish them all well in the new phase of their lives.

Eight members and their wives spent part of Fathers Day enjoying lunch and Ipswich Little Theatre's presentation of *Light Bites* where they viewed eight short plays written by Ian Pullar. Jon Henry has placed a short commentary in the News section on our web site. Among the attendees were Frank and Sandra Van Schagen who have purchased a new domicile at Teneriffe. Renovations there and at his son's place fill in Frank's spare time – when he can tear himself away from work with the mining sector.

In mid October a small group, Jan and Eric Davis, Jon and Karla Henry, Dave and Judy Morwood, Errol Beitz, Geoff Eades and Lee Rogers met up at South Bank and lunched at the Kapsali Restaurant. This is a very pleasant venue looking out over the big lagoon and the weather was great as well. Plenty of chat and a nice meal – we should do this again was the view of all.

Overseas travel is not solely the province of retirees. Greg Claydon (who is usually a good source of departmental news) is currently OS – last heard from in Las Vegas. Richard Priman is cruising the Rhine while Peter Gilbey is holding the fort for him. In return, Richard has to provide Peter and Lesley with advance tips for the similar trip they are planning in 2013.

The WRRRA Christmas luncheon was held at COTAH on 17 November and was attended by 45 members and spouses – a pleasing increase on recent attendances. The food was of a high standard – almost as good as the company. Terry Loos provided another set of his trivia questions. Peter Boettcher, CEO of SunWater, graced us with his presence and told us of a business which in many respects is very different from the one of 'the olden days'. There are some notes on SunWater on page 7.

Among the guests was John Palmer who was in Brisbane on sick leave having recently undergone medical treatment for secret men's business. It was good to catch up with him and Coral. George and Merle Beran were down once again from the country. New retirees Paul Mills, Russ Robson, Hector Macdonald and Errol Beitz appear to be coping well with the trauma of not being able to go to work. Col Hazel is keeping himself young by rewriting his groundwater manual again, which offsets the trauma of being a great-grandfather – twice. The lunches are all too brief to catch up with everyone, but they are always enjoyable. What a great bunch of people we worked with!

Members may have noted in the press an event which may cause a degree of relief in government circles. Glenn Poole (former IWS employee) is due to retire from his position as Auditor-General at the end of the year after fearlessly delivering many a critical report on departments and instrumentalities. We hope he enjoys a well-earned retirement!

Thanks to Lee Rogers for his contribution to this column - Ed.

2011 Pan Pacific Barbershop Convention

In late September/ early October, Brisbane was the host city for the River Harmony Barbershop Convention. The convention brought together over 1000 male barbershop singers from all over the Pan Pacific, with singers from New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, mainland USA and Australia, competing in choruses and quartets.

The Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers (AAMBS) holds a national convention in alternating cities throughout Australia every two years. But on this occasion, it combined with the Pan Pacific and New Zealand Associations to have all three competitions held simultaneously at the Brisbane Entertainment and Convention Centre.

The Brisbane River City Clippers was the host chorus and they took on the mammoth task of organising for the event, highlights of which included a massed sing out in the Queen Street Mall and a concert attended by over 2000 people on the final night. WRRRA members Col Cooney and John Connolly sing with the River City Clippers who are always on the lookout for new members. Anyone interested should contact John Connolly.

Answers to Terry's Trivia (on page 9)

1. Caroling
2. Bordertown
3. Polaroid Camera
4. Pacific Plate
5. Scottish
6. A hermit
7. Duke of Edinburgh (but this is not really an OED word)
8. Honey
9. 1971
10. facetious

Vale Herbert Stanley Ross 08.12.1928 – 21.09.2011

Stan Ross was born at Mackay and grew up as a country lad with his only sibling, Madge. His family spent some time in Charleville as well as the east coast. On leaving school, he enrolled in Civil Engineering at the University of Queensland. He resided in Kings College (as did his near contemporary Dave Morwood), becoming President of Kings College Students Club.

On graduation, in 1950 he joined the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission which, in its various incarnations, was his employer for all his working life (see also Ian Fairweather's article). He spent time in country service, being particularly proud of being part of the team that sent water from the east coast over the Great Dividing Range (Mareeba-Dimbulah) before the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

On his return to Brisbane, he joined Irrigation Branch where he served with distinction, succeeding Don Beattie as Chief Irrigation Engineer in 1974. Among other things, he was a specialist lecturer in irrigation engineering to undergraduates at UQ. Shortly after his appointment as Chief, he suffered a stroke, but he soldiered on until he finally retired in 1988. In retirement, he was active in the Retirees Association, being the first editor of the newsletter.

Stan loved outdoor activities and delighted his two sons, David and Ian, by taking them on fishing trips – off Bribie Island and even once in the Edwards' shark cat off the coast between Mossman and Port Douglas – and for holiday tours where his son David believes they visited every water storage constructed by the Commission. Wherever he went, he seemed to know and be liked by everyone. His country upbringing instilled in him the qualities of honesty, tough resilience, flexibility and adaptability, incredible resourcefulness, respect for others, and a community spirit.

Stan had his first stroke at 46, but made the best of things; and amazed everyone with his incredible strength as his body failed him, but he continued to fight on, through multiple strokes, having a kidney removed, multiple coronary and renal stents, and renal failure, he kept going for another 36 years, lovingly cared for by his wife Joan.

As one doctor recently remarked to David, "He's one tough old man."

It was a privilege to know and work with Stan.

- compiled from various sources including material from son David's funeral eulogy.

Email to the Editor

Hi Ian.

Congratulations on producing the web page. I found it interesting: particularly having the newsletters on line. In having a random look through them I read with interest an article in No. 25 about The Herbert Chamber of Commerce releasing trout fingerlings into the streams. It might be of interest to some to know that this was not the first attempt at introducing trout into Queensland. At some time prior to February 1896 the Warwick Council released some trout but this was a failure. However on the 13th February 1896 the South Queensland Acclimatisation Society was formed.

Its objective was to undertake the acclimatisation of trout and feathered game. To further the aim as regards trout, a trout hatchery was established on Spring Creek, Killarney where the first fingerlings hatched in NSW from ova imported from New Zealand were released to the ponds on the 6th February 1896. By July the fingerlings were big enough, so they were released into streams from the Southern Border area to Toowoomba. In subsequent years they were sent further afield to Gympie, Coomera and other places. The Acclimatisation Society ceased operating the hatchery in 1904, but the hatchery did continue under private management till 1915.

During the time I lived in Killarney and I was a member of the Killarney and District Historical Society I compiled a short history of this activity.

Ian Fairweather.

Dam Levels

Members, particularly those in the south-east, will be aware of the Minister's decision to lower the full supply level of Wivenhoe Dam to 75% (of the water storage capacity). The power to do this was provided by an amendment to the *Water Act* which allows for "declaring temporary full supply levels for relevant damsto mitigate potential emergencies".

In considering whether a temporary full supply level may mitigate the impacts of a potential flood or drought, the Minister may have regard to any matter the Minister considers appropriate, including, for example – (a) meteorological forecasts; and (b) the public interest. The chief executive (of DERM) must require the operator of a dam to provide information on the safety of the dam and how it operates. He must also consult with entities about the extent to which the temporary full supply level is likely to mitigate the impacts of a flood or drought and the impacts of the proposed temporary full supply level on water security. In the SEQ region, the entity to be consulted is the Water Commission. Elsewhere the entity is the operator of the dam.

The Commission, in turn, is required to consult with Seqwater and the Grid Manager. Following this consultation, the chief executive (of DERM) will make a recommendation to the Minister who may declare a temporary full supply level.

If this results in the operator being unable to comply with the resource operations plan under which the dam operates, the operator may submit a program (an interim program) to the chief executive for approval.

If the temporary full supply level exceeds the full supply level stated in the resource operations plan, the chief executive must review any requirements relating to dam safety.

- information kindly supplied by Rolf Rose of the Water Commission (precised by the editor)

This process is rather more complicated than that proposed by the John and Mary Citizens who inform the press daily on what should be done. - Ed.

Walking the Kokoda Trail

by Hector Macdonald

Australia has deployed some one and a half thousand service personnel in Afghanistan. About 120 of these troops are members of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers and are members of the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, which is based at Enoggera and is part of the 7th Brigade. At the time of writing, 29 servicemen have been killed and about 200 have been injured. A significant number of those injured are engineers, known as sappers, and this is because their role includes the detection and disarming of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), formerly known as mines and booby traps.

Brian Freeman, a former SAS officer and commando, who runs an adventure travel company, Adventure 1000, came up with the idea of taking wounded returned servicemen from Afghanistan to New Guinea to walk the Kokoda Trail. The purpose of the exercise was to assist these soldiers with their physical and mental rehabilitation after their traumatic experiences in the war zone. The first of these activities took place over the period 13 to 22 July this year with 20 returned soldiers participating. Eighteen of these were sappers and there were two infantry soldiers, one from 6RAR at Enoggera and a commando from 2 Commando Regiment in Sydney. All these men had suffered significant injuries. The commando had lost both legs.

Sponsorship was needed to pay the costs of travel for each soldier (\$6,500) and this was obtained from individual people in the civil community, as well as a major sponsorship from the RSL in Queensland. Some of the sponsors went on the trip and the total number of participants was 47 including a film crew of four from Channel 7, who walked with the group and made a documentary, which was shown on the program, *Sunday Night*, on 7th August. As a former sapper, I decided to join the group.

Walking the Kokoda Trail is a demanding exercise and we spent three months training. This involved two sessions each week in the gym as well as 2 or 3 walks up and down Mt Coot-tha each Sunday morning carrying our packs.

After flying to Port Moresby we left Owers Corner at the southern end of the track on the morning of the 14th July to commence the 96 km walk to Kokoda. The track is a series of alternate up and down stages with the highest point being Mt Bellamy at 7400 feet. On the morning of the last day we arrived at Isurava, the scene of one of the fiercest battles on the trail and conducted a memorial service. General Peter Cosgrove, Brigadier Butler (a senior army chaplain) and Terry Meehan, the Queensland State President of the RSL, flew to the site by helicopter from Port Moresby to join us for the service. They also joined us for the final night on the track at Kokoda.

The walk would not have been possible without the magnificent logistical support provided by the local population. Fifty-two porters supported the group. One of their tasks was to carry a generator, which was used each night to recharge the batteries in the prosthetic legs worn by the commando.

The fighting on the Kokoda Trail took place from July to November 1942. As well as landing at Buna and Gona on the northern side of Papua New Guinea and moving south down the trail towards Port Moresby, the Japanese also attempted a landing in August on the eastern tip of New Guinea at Milne Bay, where the predominant land force was 7 Brigade.

In his book *Defeat into Victory* Field Marshall Slim, who at the time was commanding the XV Indian Corps in Arakan, had this to say-

“We were helped too, by a very cheering piece of news that now reached us, and of which, as a morale raiser, I made great use. In August and September 1942, Australian troops had, at Milne Bay in New Guinea, inflicted on the Japanese their first undoubted defeat on land. If the Australians, in conditions very like ours, had done it so could we. Some of us may forget that of all the Allies it was the Australian soldiers who first broke the spell of the invincibility of the Japanese Army; those of us who were in Burma have cause to remember.”

The soldiers who went on that walk are some of Australia's finest young men. To have the opportunity to walk beside them on a track where their grandfathers also fought 69 years ago is a great privilege.

Thank you Hector for this moving article. For those readers who are less familiar with Hector than I, some information about his life and times is provided below. - Ed.

Hector Macdonald commenced work with the State Government on 3 March 1958 as a university scholarship holder in civil engineering in the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. After graduation, he worked in Surface Water Resources, Construction (at Leslie Dam), Design Branch, and Underground and Stock Routes Water Supplies. In 1971 he transferred to the Department of Harbours and Marine and worked in coastal and ocean engineering for the next 18 years. He served a term as Chairman of the National Committee on Coastal and Ocean Engineering of the Institution of Engineers. Following the change of government in December 1989, the Department of Harbours and Marine was disbanded – as was the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission – and the coastal management component was transferred to the new Department of Environment and Heritage (subsequently renamed as the Environmental Protection Agency). As there was far less emphasis on engineering projects under the new government, Hector studied law as a hobby and in 1994 was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court. He has spent the last 17 years working as a counsel in the government. In March 2009 the Environmental Protection Agency was disbanded and all staff transferred to the newly formed Department of Environment and Resource Management.

In 1963 Hector joined the Citizen Military Forces (now known as the Army Reserve) and he retired in 1986 as the Commander 7th Brigade and also the Senior Army Reserve Officer for Queensland, responsible for the administration of some 7000 soldiers. It is the 7th Brigade which provides the bulk of the troops for the force in Afghanistan. For the last 20 years he has been the Patron of the Sapper Association Queensland, whose members are former soldiers in the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers.

He retired from the public service on 21 October 2011.

The Early Days of the old IWS

by Ian Fairweather

The reconstituted Irrigation and Water Supply Commission (IWS) had been in existence for about three years at the time I joined it in February 1949. There had been an Irrigation Commission before this time. The first Commissioner was appointed in 1922 but by 1931 the Commission had been downgraded to a sub-department of the Department of Lands. During this period, except for Theodore, not much was done in the way of irrigation works. However the Government, as part of its post war reconstruction program, wanted things to happen in the irrigation field. So the new IWS was born

(Tom) Lang was appointed Commissioner in July 1947. He only remained in the job for a short period resigning in November 1948. Despite this, he achieved a lot, producing many reports, getting projects under way and establishing an organisation structure that served the State well for a long time. One of the things he did was to visit universities to recruit newly qualified Engineers. At his talks he emphasised that those who joined the Commission would get good experience, be given responsibility and have to learn to improvise. He illustrated this with a film showing a truck with one wheel jacked off the ground being used as a belt pulley to drive some item of machinery at a construction site.

The gazette notice dated 12th February 1949 of my appointment as engineer Division III included the names of 15 engineers, namely; Keith Bedford, George Pain, Mark Bracewell, Donald Clarke, Noel Murray, John Fraser, Clifford Smith, Kerras Burke, David King, James Couston, Frederick McKay, James Williamson, Ian Fairweather, Lawrence Jones, Gerald O'Hanlon. This presented a seating problem. I am not sure how many of these made the Commission their life's work.

The staff at that time was scattered throughout the Lands Department building. When I arrived there was not a spare table or chair in the design office, Fred Haigh was Senior Irrigation Engineer, acting Senior Design Engineer and at the same time for a short period acting Senior Construction Engineer. Fred had a rather large table with a drafting table in front of it, which he never used. For the first few weeks I was installed using the front of Fred's desk, the drafting table, and when he was not there his phone and his visitor chair. I think he got sick of looking at me because after a short time Laurie Hayman, an engineer, and I were sent to Emerald to relieve the surveyor, Rich Hass, who was going on leave. I never worked out if there was some subtle message in that. The long term solution to this overcrowding was the recycling of the old Courier Mail building.

In 1949 from June to August there was a coal strike resulting in severe electricity rationing, we had no electric lights or heating in the office, I remember it was a cold winter. Fortunately the IWS had a large supply of Aladdin pressure lamps and these were brought into the office. They gave a good light and radiated a lot of heat. One was placed on my desk so I had light and some heating.

It was some time in 1950 when part of the Courier Mail building was ready for occupancy. The first to make the move was Irrigation Branch, so I was in the vanguard of the first group into the building. The ones I can remember from the vanguard were John Philip, Stewart Robinson, George Jordan and Greg Chettle. There may have been others.

As time went by, the whole branch moved and more people were appointed. Stan Ross joined us shortly after the move and I remember

Stewart congratulating me on being promoted as I was no longer the junior engineer. It was an interesting time particularly as the builders were still working in the building. There was a lot of noise all the time especially when jackhammers were being used. I guess we can be grateful that this was in the days before transistor radios. There were also lots of rats.

Provision was made in the building for a couple of judges, probably from the Land Court. They were placed near the room occupied by Harry Hiley. Those who remember Harry will know that he had a loud voice. His comment on finding out about the judges was, "Hope I do not get called up for contempt of court."

As I remember it the plan for the space was for the Design office to occupy the western side, Irrigation the middle and Project Planning the eastern side. The western wall was a large blank brick wall with no windows. At that time Irrigation Branch was engaged on the preliminary layout for the Mareeba Dimbulah Scheme which involved a lot of contour plans. The brick wall was as an asset as we were able to attach the plans to the wall and view the whole area as one. So as we were the only occupants we took over the Design office space, which was also as far away from the noise as we could get.

In the fullness of time, the Design office moved. Norrie Sutton, the Chief Draftsman, was very upset as he wanted his space, but we held out till the irrigation part of the report was finished and then retreated to our proper place in the order of things. I think the plans decorated the wall for some time after we moved.

When all were in occupation the plan printing run was shared amongst the cadets from the three branches on a roster system. I think they made two trips a day to the Lands Office, for a fortnight each. Very few of the cadets liked the job. On one occasion one of the cadets claimed he had completed his roster and there was almost a stand up fight between him, the Chief Draftsman and the Senior Design Engineer. I think the cadet won.

It was about this time the IWS put a stall in the EKKA. It was organised and managed by Irrigation branch and included a working model irrigation farm put together at the Rocklea depot. Staff volunteered to attend the stall. The big attraction was that you got a free ticket to the EKKA. I remember a lot of visitors to our stall. This might have been due to the fact that we were the first stall inside one of the entrances and everybody had to pass us. I don't remember the event being repeated.

When the Mareeba Dimbulah report was nearing completion for some reason some of the staff were required to work overtime. I might add it was the only time in my whole career that I was paid overtime. Anyway there was a transport strike, so there was a problem getting people to and from work when they worked overtime. In those days not many of the staff owned cars and not everybody had a driving licence. To solve the problem of transport the Commission supplied vehicles, in the form of ex army blitz buggies and troop carriers. They were big, heavy, uncomfortable, rough, noisy, manual requiring double declutching for each gear change and no power steering or seat belts. Because I had a licence, although I had never driven a vehicle even remotely resembling these monsters, I got to drive one of the troop carriers. Fortunately this episode only lasted for a few days. Believe me I had no trouble getting right of way but I never hit anybody.

The early Days of the old IWS (cont.)

I was transferred to Mareeba about September 1951, where I was having a wonderful time. Then in November I got a summons to return to head office to relieve the Senior Engineer who was going on leave. By that time I had reached the exalted heights of Engineer Division II. I remembered what Lang said about getting experience and taking responsibility. Apparently I was the most senior engineer in the branch available, a situation that reflects the shortage of experienced engineers in the early stages of the Commission's development. My move was to be for a month, but ended up being five months after which I returned to Mareeba only ever to return to Head office for short visits.

My memory of Christmas 1951 is that we had a Commission Christmas Party in the office. It was my first experience of an office party. Fred Haigh supplied some or all of the beer and the staff contributed to the eats and probably some drinks. I enjoyed the event particularly as it was held during office hours, however there

was one of the staff who did not approve. He worked through and left at the normal time. I admired his strength. In those days one did not party during office hours particularly in the public service. From reports we received in the bush, subsequent parties at Head Office were lively affairs.

I resigned from the Commission in 1958 after nine very happy and rewarding years and for some time had little contact with the Commission. Some years later I once again had a close association when Fred Haigh agreed to the Commission undertaking the investigations for the Ross River Dam for the Townsville City Council and then to supervise its construction. Because working for the IWS was my first job, where I learnt so much and was very happy, I saw it as my spiritual engineering home and I was pleased when I found out after retirement that I could join the Retirees Association., but a little sad to see the IWS, as I knew it of old, disappear, but organisations must change or they die.

Many thanks to Ian for this fascinating contribution. - Ed.

Vanuatu Yacht Rally 2011

by Ken Ward

I've been cruising up and down the Queensland coast on a friend's yacht for a couple of weeks annually for several years now, quite enjoying the experience. His boat was a 31ft sloop which we considered a little small to venture too far offshore, although Jessica Watson's is only slightly longer. The decision was made to upgrade and I agreed to take a half share in a Canadian designed C & C 36ft sloop we found for sale in Gladstone. It was in excellent condition at a good price, having been built in Kingaroy of all places in 1996.

A naturopath with a business at Raby Bay has been organising yacht rallies to Vanuatu annually since 2005 so we decided the 2011 rally would be our introduction to blue water sailing. There followed a hectic few weeks checking rigging etc., fitting a HF radio which involved having to slip the boat, hiring an offshore liferaft and provisioning for up to two weeks at sea. Initially thirteen other yachts nominated, with eleven of us eventually setting sail on May 14. We were the second smallest in the fleet with a crew of three.

Saturday, 14th May was a perfect day with a light SE wind to push us across the bay through the north east passage and out past Flinders Reef. The intention was to sail east for a couple of days to take advantage of the northerly current west of New Caledonia and then up to Chesterfield or Huon Reefs to rest for a day or so. Unfortunately the light to moderate SE to NE winds we had been expecting turned into a strong to gale force ESE blow due to a large high pressure system which intensified and moved very slowly over Victoria and the Tasman for the next ten days. The wind started suddenly about 2am with an accompanying squall and it was all hands on deck to lower the mainsail and furl the jib. This necessitated starting the engine to bring the boat into the wind, but no one noticed that a rope used to reef the mainsail had dropped over the side. This fouled the propeller, stalling the engine and it was ten more days before the seas had abated enough before I could dive over the side to cut the rope free.

The wind was relentless, generally blowing from 30 to 40 knots with the wind gauge registering 50 knots on one occasion. Some of the combined swells and waves looked to be around six metres which

meant we could only sail in a generally northerly direction and with no engine had no chance of reaching the shelter of one of the Coral Sea reefs. We eventually ended up about 200nm west of the northern tip of Vanuatu, before turning south back the way we had come. The next day was day ten and the wind finally started to ease with the swells down to less than two metres by about 4:00pm. I donned a mask, snorkel and safety harness, climbed over the side and half an hour and two knives later had managed to cut the tangled mess off the prop shaft. We celebrated with a couple of drinks, started the engine and were finally able to sail in the general direction of our destination. Two days later at about 7:00pm we entered the Segund Channel separating the southern end of Espiritu Santo from the island of Aore and tied up to a mooring buoy outside the palatial Aore residence of the rally organiser. We were the first boat in by about 24 hours as the others had managed to shelter at one of the reefs.

A celebration had been organised to welcome the crews with tribesmen from Pentecost Island performing customary ceremonies, women from Gaua Island with their water music (they were recently at Southbank) and the not to be missed kava making and tasting. It was an interesting and entertaining experience.

After the convoluted formalities of clearing customs and immigration had been completed we motored across the Segund Channel to anchor outside the Beachfront Resort, a pleasant establishment run by an expatriate Australian who welcomes yachties. This is fortunate as it's the only decent anchorage in the channel. The Segund Channel is generally deep and was home base to the US Southwest Pacific Fleet during the battle of the Coral Sea. At its eastern end is Million Dollar Point where the Americans dumped huge amounts of munitions and materiel at the end of WW2. It is an excellent diving and snorkelling area with abundant spectacular coral and aquatic life. There is also the sunken wreck of the "President Coolidge", a large luxury liner converted to a troopship which had the misfortune to score an own goal by hitting a couple of US mines when entering the channel. Apparently it rates as the best dive of its type in the world.

continued overleaf ...

The second largest town in Vanuatu is Luganville, often referred to as Santo and it lies on the northern side of the Segund Channel. It has a population of about ten thousand but the unemployment rate is around 80 to 90 percent. However the people are very friendly and the crime rate comparatively low. There is a large market operating 24 hours a day in which people from surrounding villages sell fresh produce like taro, citrus, choy, bananas and papayas etc. Most of the shops seem to stock Chinese sourced items similar to a small Crazy Clarks. The locally produced and processed beef is excellent coming from mainly British breeds. Fuel, petrol (benzine) and diesel (mazoot) is not much more expensive than in Brisbane. There is an excellent French restaurant there also.

Family and friends flew in and out of Luganville over the next couple of weeks in which we sailed among the islands up the east coast of Santo exploring the WW2 relics, sandy coral fringed beaches and hunting for ripe pawpaws growing wild along the bush tracks. A memorable discovery was the small resort of Oyster Bay with bungalows built over the water. This was managed by a friendly couple from the Gold Coast who made us welcome on at least three occasions. Oyster Island is close to the site of a wartime US fighter base and a couple of planes that didn't make it back lie in the surrounding water. A large US military hospital once stood on the mainland hill overlooking the island and about 30nm out to sea to the east can be seen the mist shrouded island of Aoba or Ambae as it is variously known. Aoba is the famous "Bali Hai" of James Michener's "Tales of the South Pacific" and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Broadway musical. Michener was based on Santo during WW2. He returned years later but refused to visit Aoba not wanting to end the mystique. Apparently "Bloody Mary" was a real life character who ran a house of ill repute on the waterfront below the hospital.

We spent the last two weeks in Vanuatu sailing around the Banks Islands to the north of Espiritu Santo. Gaua, Vanua Lava, Ureparapara and Motalava are beautiful islands with magnificent coral, beaches with both black and white sand, waterfalls and active and extinct volcanoes. The people live subsistence lifestyles harvesting copra from their plantations to trade for rice and other goods. They were very happy to see us when we anchored in remote bays as we took

some basic over the counter medical supplies, useful school items like exercise books and pencils and hooks and sinkers with us to hand out. We traded some excess clothing for fresh fruit and vegetables which were welcome. We toured a couple of villages and even joined the "Twin Waterfalls Sasara Village Yacht Club and Guest House" established by the enterprising Chief Kerely Malau for about five dollars each. We became member numbers 29 to 32. Membership included a welcoming speech by the chief, a welcoming song sung by the chief's family to the tune of the British national anthem, an excellent meal cooked by the chief's wife and a demonstration of native hut construction. We thought it money well spent. I understand that they see a yacht on average about once every six weeks.

Unfortunately it all had to end as only two of the four returning crew are retirees, so we sailed away on 29th June in good sailing conditions. This lasted until we reached the French territory of Chesterfield Reef about 500nm from Santo. This is a huge system surrounded by sand cays with an unmanned weather station on the southern end. Thousands of sea birds and turtles nest here. After resting for a day we headed SW towards Cato Reef and then spent the next four days with little wind and a glassy South Pacific. Having limited reserves of diesel, we could only use the engine for about twelve hours a day. Luckily a southerly started as we approached Sandy Cape but this turned into a howling south westerly off the Sunshine Coast. It eventually eased and we had just enough fuel to motor around Bribie Island and up the Brisbane River to the quarantine wharf on what was one of the coldest mornings this year, 12th July.

The boat performed extremely well in some trying conditions as did the crew, particularly as the helm is in an open cockpit and the helmsman was constantly being sprayed in rough conditions. Sea conditions on the trip over were too chaotic to use the auto pilot so the boat had to be hand steered in one and a half hour shifts. We are thinking of tackling the Louisiades or Solomons next year if we can round up a crew after this marathon.

Thank you Ken, for this contribution. Even though I am a recalcitrant land-lubber, I found it fascinating. - Ed.

SunWater Snippets

The Connors River Dam, Connors to Moranbah Pipeline and the Moranbah to Alpha Pipeline projects will provide secure and reliable water supplies to support Central Queensland's coal industry future. In early September the Premier announced that the Infrastructure Projects Assessment Team would investigate options for private sector funding for these projects. SunWater remains the proponent for all three, with construction still expected to start in March 2012.

SunWater has design, construction and operational interests in a number of Coal Seam Gas (CSG) water projects in the Surat basin. Construction of the Kenya to Chinchilla Weir pipeline commenced in August this year. The four month construction program to complete the 20km

buried pipeline is on track for commissioning to commence in December. The pipeline will see treated CSG water used for irrigation and supplementation of Chinchilla's local town water supply. This beneficial use scheme is the first of its kind.

It's no secret that further west things are hotting up around Wandoan, where CSG projects and mining developments are materialising – and not without some landholder discontent. SunWater has been investigating options to match the CSG water sources with the mining demands while also seeking to appease affected landholders with offerings of water. Long term reliability of supply will remain an issue until Nathan Dam is constructed. In the short term CSG water production will exceed local mining demands and pipeline transfers to the Dawson River

for reuse by existing water harvesting licence holders will be necessary. Later when the Wandoan hub demands exceed the CSG water production, the pipeline will be run in reverse via a future pump station on the Dawson River.

Ben Russo recently became a great-grandfather and has been grinning from ear to ear ever since.

Russell Paton has been promoted into the newly created role of Project Delivery Manager for Infrastructure Development. An extra spring in his step has also been noted.

Congratulations also go to Amanda Butler, one of our junior engineers, who won a scholarship to attend this year's ANCOLD Conference in Melbourne, along with the regulars.

Mark Lepper, SunWater

HEALTH *and beauty*

Medical research continues to come up with the most amazing results (sometimes you can't help wondering if they're just made up. But if they're reported in such prestigious newspapers as the *Courier Mail* they must be true.) One recent report claims that bachelors are twice as likely to die of cancer as married men. Norwegian scientists looked at the records of 440,000 men and women diagnosed with cancer from 1970 to 2007 and compared them with marital status. Never being married, rather than divorced or widowed, doubled the death rate from common cancers (including lung, breast and prostate) in men from 18 to 35% and in women to a more modest increase from 17 to 22%. No causal connection has been postulated.

In Saudi Arabia, it has been reported, the current life expectancy for males is now 72 years, whereas for women it is 76 years. Could this be because Saudi women are shielded from exposure to the sun's deleterious rays by their burkas, from the dangers of driving on the roads and from the traumas of having to make political decisions at the ballot box? Is there a lesson in this for western society? (To go off at a tangent – which I have on rare occasions been known to do – women in France were only given the right to vote in 1945.) Now that French politicians have voted to ban the burka and continue to allow women to vote, will life expectancy for the French female population move closer to that of the male?

Whilst old age may have a number of disadvantages (and I leave it to you to enumerate them), there are distinct positives. One is you don't have to go to work any more. Another is that age **does** bring wisdom, according to researchers at the University of Montreal. Men and women over the age of 60 use their brains more efficiently than their younger counterparts. Those in their 20s and 30s are interested only in instant gratification and cannot see the benefits of planning. While oldies may take more time to come to a decision, they are simply conserving their energy. Regardless of how long they take, it is generally a better decision than one made in youthful haste. Younger people may give the impression of being sharper simply by coming up with answers more quickly.

Scientists have also found that the sweet old Grandma is not just a myth. Older people are simply nicer as "emotional intelligence" only peaks when people enter their 60s. In one study, scientists looked at how 144 healthy adults in their 20s, 40s and 60s reacted to neutral, sad and "disgusting" film clips. The findings showed that it was easier for older people to see negative scenes in a positive light. This is a recognised coping strategy that draws on life experience and lessons learned from the past. "In later life, individuals often adopt different perspectives and goals that focus more on close interpersonal relationships. Evolution seems to have tuned our nervous systems in ways that are optimal for these kinds of interpersonal and compassionate activities as we age."

Beauty isn't even skin deep

A recent study has found that women wearing make-up are considered more likeable, trustworthy, competent and attractive than women who don't. Two groups of 149 and 119 adults were shown pictures of women's faces with and without cosmetics and were asked to rate them on both first impressions and longer investigations. Three types of make-up were applied – minimal, moderate and dramatic. The overall results were positive towards those wearing make-up, although excessive make-up had a detrimental impact on perceptions of trustworthiness and likeability (the painted Jezebel effect?)

Of course women have always believed this, resulting in the cosmetics industry being worth over \$40 billion by 2015.

Frescoes from ancient civilisations clearly show heavily made-up women and the practice has continued since with a huge variety of products. Some of these were toxic and there was a long tradition of European women poisoning themselves in the name of beauty. For example, pupils could be attractively dilated with drops of belladonna, or deadly nightshade. Most dangerous of all was ceruse, a paste made of white lead and commonly known as 'paint'. Ceruse was hugely popular. For females with smallpox scars it was applied as a kind of grout to fill in the divots, but even women who had unblemished skins used it to give themselves a lovely ghostly pallor. It was recorded in 1519 that women of fashion 'whyte their face, necke and pappis (ie breasts) with cerusse'.

Ceruse had three principal drawbacks: it cracked when the wearer grimaced; after a few hours it turned grey (so more had to be applied); and it could kill. At the very least it could make eyes swell painfully and teeth loosen and fall out. At least two well known beauties, the courtesan Kitty Fisher and the Countess of Coventry died from ceruse poisoning while still in their twenties.

So ladies, be careful of what you wear lest you suffer medically or fail the trustworthiness/likeability test.

And gents, although 18th century fashions of elaborate male make-up reached their use-by date, those devious cosmetics manufacturers are scheming to get you to make yourselves more beautiful – and to reduce your disposable income.

"The cost of living has gone up so much, I don't think we can afford to exchange \$50 notes at Christmas."
"Yes. We'd better cut it back to \$20."



Exercise those Brain Cells

**XMAS
MAIL
EARLY
PLEASE**

Simply substitute a number for each letter.



Solution to last edition's puzzle

Both men are lawyers. An engineer could never claim to be a lawyer, so Jim must be a lawyer which he admitted truthfully. So his second statement must be false.

How Come – ?

Hector's tale (p 4) reminded me of the soldier's marching orders – "Left, right, left, right." Why is the left foot first? Could it simply be that it rolls off the Sergeant Major's tongue more easily? Or is it based on the same superstition that caused the Latin for 'left' (sinister) to become synonymous with 'evil'. Putting one's left foot forward is a symbol of aggression. A marching army would want to appear aggressive and also gain the assistance of the dark and sinister forces of the occult world.

One of the original functions of a footman was to guard the home of their master and ensure that visitors did not enter in a hostile manner by leading with their right foot. Visitors to Buddhist temples are also instructed on the correct foot for entering.

A vivid illustration of the choice of leading foot in a military action is an early frieze at the Mausoleum in Bodrum, Turkey. It shows a soldier kicking his enemy in the groin with his left foot!

Terry's Trivia

Some more trivia from Terry taken from the set posed at the mid-year luncheon. The answers are on page 2. - Ed.

1. What is wassailing? (i) Feasting; (ii) Wailing from a high tower; (iii) Caroling. (iv) Pillaging.
2. Bob Hawke was born in which small South Australian town near the Victorian border: (i) Eucla; (ii) Tocumwal; (iii) Bordertown; (iv) Nuriootpa;
3. Edwin Land (1909-1991) in 1948 invented the: (i) Microwave oven; (ii) Polaroid Camera; (iii) Colour TV.
4. Which is the largest tectonic plate: (i) Arabian; (ii) Eurasian; (iii) Pacific; (iv) Royal Albert; (v) North American;
5. James Watt, inventor of the steam engine was: (i) Irish; (ii) Welsh; (iii) Scottish; (iv) English
6. What or who is an Anchorite: (i) A poisonous plant; (ii) A mineral; (iii) A religious hermit; (iv) A race of people.
7. Who is credited with creating the word 'dontopedalogy' (the science of opening your mouth and putting your foot in it): (i) Spike Milligan; (ii) Peter Sellers; (iii) Peter Ustinov; (iv) The Duke of Edinburgh.
8. What sweetens Drambuie: (i) Sugar; (ii) Molasses; (iii) Honey.
9. In Rugby League in which year was the value of a field goal reduced from two points to one point?: (i) 1980; (ii) 1965; (iii) 1971; (iv) 1975
10. There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: 'abstemious' and:

A Mathematical Limerick

A dozen, a gross and a score
Plus three times the square root of four
Divided by seven
Plus five times eleven
Is nine squared and not a bit more.

Try it yourself - Ed.

A Sign of the Times

In a hotel in Assos, Turkey:

**Can you imagine how many detergent and water
used for towels in all hotels of the world?**

Hand in hand for better environment

PLEASE MAKE A CHOICE

Towels on floor "Change"

**Towels back on hangers: I want to use them one more
THANK YOU**

MENSA INVITATIONAL (forwarded by Marilyn Caton)

The *Washington Post's* Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Here are the winners:

1. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
2. Ignoramus : A person who's both stupid and an asshole.
3. Intaxication : Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
4. Reintarnation : Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
5. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
6. Foreploy : Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
7. Giraffiti : Vandalism spray-painted very, very high
8. Sarchasm : The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
9. Inoculatte : To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
10. Osteopornosis : A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
11. Karmageddon : It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
12. Decafalon (n.): The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
13. Glibido : All talk and no action.
14. Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
15. Arachnoleptic Fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
16. Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
17. Caterpallor (n.): The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.



Book Club

Our daughter Jean is an expert in Young Adult (YA) literature, having run the Somerset *Celebration of Literature* for a number of years, working with a number of publishing houses to review books and prepare teachers notes, and being one of the judges of the Premier's Awards for literature. As a result, she often recommends books I would enjoy.

One such recommendation is the trilogy *Once, Then and Now* by Morris Gleitzman. These were particularly apposite as I read the first two while we toured Poland earlier in the year. They are narrated by nine year old Felix who, as a Jew, was caught up in the Polish occupation by the Nazis during World War II. They are brilliantly realised and extremely moving. The third, *Now*, is narrated by Felix's granddaughter, a young Australian who shares with her grandfather the terror of the Victorian bushfires. Gleitzman is a wonderful story teller. A few years ago we saw the stage adaptation of his *Two Weeks with the Queen* which was outstanding.

We have found yet another commendable writer of crime novels set in other places. *Bruno, Chief of Police* is set in the Dordogne, in rural France (which we have booked to tour in August 2012). The author, Martin Walker, is an Englishman who has obviously relished his time as a temporary expatriate. Bruno heads up the local police in the mythical town of St Denis where he immerses himself in the local activities. He organises the parades and festivities and keeps order in the town. A pillar of the local tennis and rugby clubs, he teaches sport to the local schoolchildren. He finds lost dogs, fights fires, registers births and deaths and enforces the parking regulations. But he maintains a sophisticated intelligence network to outwit the interfering bureaucrats of the European Union in far-off Brussels.

Bruno applies his own sense of justice, which sometimes puts him at odds with the local *gendarmier* and the *Police Nationale*, as he does his utmost to detect criminals. The book (and its sequels) succeed on both levels of resolution of crime and portrayal of local ambience. Recommended.

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to Harvey Yates for his continuing cartoons; to the contributors; to Graham Bauer who printed it; to Ann Liekens and Rebecca Wall who made it available to departmental staff; and to Jon Henry who placed it on our website – www.waterysauces.org.au.

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Watery Sauces No 66

Looking Back

As Alphonse Karr so perspicaciously observed in 1849, *The more things change, the more they are the same*.

Lexicographers have to cope with the fact that words change in meaning as time passes. Nevertheless, sometimes the idiosyncratic definitions provided by early lexicographers may remain surprisingly relevant. Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914), more than 100 years ago, produced in his *The Cynic's Word Book* (1906) and *The Devil's Dictionary* (1911) definitions which are just as apposite today. For example:

ALLIANCE, *n*. In international politics, the union of two thieves who have their hands so deeply inserted in each other's pocket that they cannot separately plunder a third.

APPLAUSE, *n*. The echo of a platitude.

BATTLE, *n*. A method of untying with the teeth a political knot that would not yield to the tongue.

CONSERVATIVE, *n* ... Calamities are of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.

HISTORY, *n*. An account, mostly false, of events, mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools.

PEACE, *n*. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

PREJUDICE, *n*. A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

SAINT, *n*. A dead sinner revised and edited.

Comparability

Our 7 year old granddaughter in Year 1 was given the task of finding one thing Australia and USA had in common and one in which they differed. Isn't the answer to both *The English Language*?



"No, I won't write a note saying Fido ate your homework. Miss Jackson knows he was at the vet's last night."

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